

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An automatic sampler comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a first coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said first coating material includes a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold that is plated or deposited on said needle, and wherein a second coating material comprising a quartz thin film is formed on an inner surface of said needle by a chemical vapor deposition method.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) An instrument comprising:
an automatic sampler including:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface

coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a synthetic resin coating including polyetheretherketone that is coated on said needle, wherein the instrument further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.

Claim 4 (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) An automatic sampler comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a non-noble metal that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of iron and is plated or deposited on said needle, said non-noble metal including nickel or chromium.

Claims 6-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) The instrument according to Claim 3, further comprising: a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.

Claim 17 (Cancelled)